



*Pride of the Ojibwa*

---

# Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians

---

Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal Governing Board  
13394 West Trepenia Road  
Hayward, WI 54843  
Phone: 715-634-8934  
FAX: 715-634-4797

Louis Taylor, Chair  
Russell Barber, Vice-Chair  
Brian Bisonette, Secretary/Treasurer

Council Members:

Connie Corbine  
Michael Isham  
Gaiashkibos  
Agnes Fleming

Location: Sawyer County, northwest Wisconsin

---



# Lac Courte Oreilles

## Tribal Statistics

There are currently 6,154 Lac Courte Oreilles tribal members.

- 17 and under = 803
- Ages 18 - 64 = 4,699
- 65 and older = 652

The LCO Reservation, located mostly in Sawyer County, totals 69,072 acres.

- 23,712.52 acres are tribally owned
- 24,285.73 acres are individually allotted
- 6,072.38 acres are considered fee land
- LCO has additional trust land located in Burnett County near Rice Lake and Washburn County near Rocky Ridge Lake
- Approximately 2,252 tribal members live on reservation, trust, or fee land along with 708 non-tribal members.
- Additionally, large numbers of tribal members live in Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and Chicago.

LCO is the largest employer in Sawyer County (*Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development*), employing approximately 900 people.

## Tribal Government

The LCO Tribal Governing Board is composed of seven members.

- A chairperson
- Vice-chairperson
- Secretary/treasurer
- Four council members
- The council meets weekly
- Decisions are made by a majority rule
- Elections are held in June every two years (every odd numbered year) for a four-year term. Terms are staggered

## Brief History

The Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin historically occupied a vast territory within a 100 mile radius of the present location of the Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation located near Hayward, WI. The Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) people are one band of the large Ojibwe Nation that originally occupied the upper eastern woodlands area of the North American continent. The Treaty of 1854 established the LCO reservation.

---

In the years of 1825, 1837, and 1842, many bands of the Ojibwe Nation entered into sovereign treaties with the United States. In the treaties, the Ojibwe Nation ceded territories of land, which became a part of the United States and reserved unto themselves rights to use the land and its resources. In 1854, the Treaty of LaPointe established specific territorial rights of the LCO people including the right to hunt, fish, and gather in the northern third of Wisconsin. The off-reservation hunting, fishing, and gathering rights of the Ojibwe people were recognized in 1983 after years of litigation in Lac Courte Oreilles v. Voigt, 700 F.2d 341 (7<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1983). In addition to Wisconsin, off-reservation hunting, fishing, and gathering rights were subsequently established in the State of Minnesota in a similar treaty rights case involving a Minnesota tribe.

At the time the LCO reservation was established, the tribal elders wanted to protect certain resources that included wild rice beds and fishing areas on the Grindstone, Chief, and Lac Courte Oreilles Lakes. The land was also rich in timber stands of oak, conifer, maple, hickory, cedar, and birch. There were bountiful fishing sites on the Chippewa, Chief, and Couderay rivers as well as hunting and trapping areas for waterfowl, deer, bear, beaver, mink, muskrat, and other game. The Tribe also used historical water transportation routes via the Chippewa, Flambeau, and Namekagon rivers.

Although the tribe already had a traditional government that provided safety and welfare to its people, after years of resistance, the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe adopted an Indian Reorganization Act Constitution in 1966. The constitution establishes a seven member Tribal Governing Board to make decisions on behalf of the LCO people on the areas of land, establishment of a tribal court, ordinances, contracts, agreements, governmental negotiations, tribal businesses, housing, etc. The constitution recognizes the sovereign immunity of the tribe along with jurisdiction within its territory on and off the reservation. The LCO Tribe is a federally recognized tribal government that exercises its rights of sovereignty and governance established by the treaties of 1825, 1837, 1842, and 1854 along with its constitution, initially adopted in 1966.

## Tribal Services

### Law Enforcement

- Five officers
- Cross-deputized with the Sawyer County Sheriff's Department
- Funded primarily with tribal funds, some discretionary federal grants, and Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance funds

### Court System

- One judge
- Practitioners must be admitted to the tribal court bar
- The LCO court system handles cases such as child protection, guardianships, civil, traffic, divorce, custody, child support, paternity, domestic abuse, small claims, contracts, and recognition of foreign orders
- Funded by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance-Office of Justice Programs, Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission and tribal funds

### Education

LCO youth are educated in three primary school districts. These districts are:

- Lac Courte Oreilles School
  - Winter School District (70 students/17% of student body)
  - Hayward School District (485/24.2%)
- (Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction)

One tribal school:

- The Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa School is a pre-K - 12<sup>th</sup> grade school
- Total enrollment of 330 students
- The school is accredited
- Some funds from the Bureau of Indian Affairs
- A portion of the food program receives state funding
- No state equalization aid or charter school funds
- The Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa School has a 95% graduation rate

Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College (LCOOCC) serves higher education needs in remote, low-income areas of northern Wisconsin:

- Per-semester enrollment exceeds 550 students from four reservation areas
- "Open Door" enrollment policy recruits both native and non-native students
- Accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA)

### Healthcare

- Clinic services include: urgent care, ambulatory care, pharmacy, dental, lab, x-ray, diagnostic lab, mental health, Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA); Women, Infants and Children (WIC) programs; community health, diabetes care, Honor Our Children, optical, and nutrition
- Funded by LCO, with some funds coming from the Indian Health Service and the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

### Social Services

- Oakwood Haven - an emergency shelter
- Consolidated Family Services Department
- A halfway house
- An Indian Child Welfare Department
- AODA counseling
- Child care assistance programs
- Funded through a variety of sources including tribal, state and federal monies

## Economic Enterprises

- LCO employs approximately 900 people
- 21% of those are non-Native American
- 79% are Native American

Business	Type of Business
LCO Casino, Lodge, Convention Center Hayward, WI	Gaming/lodging/meeting facility
LCO Cranberry Marsh Hayward, WI	Cranberry marsh
LCO Development Corporation Hayward, WI	Construction/infrastructure/trucking
LCO IGA Hayward, WI	Grocery/liquor Store

LCO Quick Stop  
Hayward, WI

Gasoline/light grocery

LCO Club Café  
Hayward, WI

Breakfast/lunch

Grindstone Creek Casino  
Hayward, WI

Gaming

LCO Convenience Store  
Hayward, WI

Gasoline/car wash/light grocery/liquor

LCO Smoke Shop  
Hayward, WI

Cigarettes/tobacco

LCO Federal Credit Union  
Hayward, WI

Savings/loans

Herman's Landing - LCO  
Hayward, WI

Resort

WOJB-FM  
Hayward, WI

Radio station

Hydro Facility  
Winter, WI

Electric plant